

Strategy Research Project

The Role of Public Affairs in Building Partner Capacity

by

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United States Army War College
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Abstract

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In order to support National and DoD strategic guidance, it is essential for public affairs to be a key part of Building Partner Capacity in order to assist our allies and partners to achieve proficiency in the information domain. When we assist our partners in building public affairs capacity, they achieve a greater understanding of the strategic impact of communication and better complement our communication efforts during a contingency. There is little to no literature describing how the U.S. military supports the development of other nations' public affairs capabilities. U.S. public affairs skills and knowledge are a "means" that supports the achievement of U.S. strategic objectives; building our partner's public affairs capacity serves as the "ways." U.S. military PAOs at the institutional and operational level support the Building Partner Capacity mission and develop capabilities that produce lasting capacity in our partners.

The Role of Public Affairs in Building Partner Capacity

The January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG), entitled “Sustaining Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense,” opens with a letter from President Obama stating, “Our Nation is at a moment of transition.”¹ The guidance charges the military with developing innovative, low-cost, and small footprint approaches to achieve U.S. security objectives.² After more than a decade of sustained combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. government is shifting our posture towards the Asia-Pacific region. The end of the Iraq war and an unfolding transition in Afghanistan, along with demanding fiscal realities, present a decision point for the U.S. military: how do you remain a global leader in all parts of the world? For the foreseeable future, the U.S. must share the costs and responsibilities for providing global security with our international partners by leveraging current alliances with partners and forging new ones.

To meet the challenges presented by the future strategic environment, the DSG advocates creating new opportunities to build capacity of our allies and partners around the world in order to share security burdens. Security cooperation, security assistance and partner capacity building are the mechanisms for getting this done and will greatly benefit the U.S. military as we face complex challenges associated with an uncertain security environment of the next decade. Building Partner Capacity (BPC) has been an important issue for the last two U.S. Secretaries of Defense. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates directed that the U.S. Government get better at building partner capacity by helping other countries help themselves or by providing them with equipment, training, or other forms of security assistance so they would be prepared to fight alongside U.S. forces.³ Secretary Leon Panetta echoed this message during a

recent speech where he stated that “partner capacity is an essential military mission and must remain an integral component of our approach outlined by the DSG.”⁴

The last decade has also brought tremendous change to the global information environment. Technological advances and an increasing use of social media platforms have connected people in more ways across greater distances than ever before. For the foreseeable future, the U.S. will continue to face a complex operational and media environment in which “a 24/7 global media industry, and the rapid growth of the use of the Internet and social media have changed dramatically.”⁵ Because the public has come to expect timely and accurate information, military public affairs (PA) operations have to be particularly coherent and rapid in order to have an impact on the audiences we are informing. Additionally, U.S. military actions will likely be undertaken as part of a multinational alliance or coalition. To truly succeed in this environment, it is critical to have allies and partners who are credible and trustworthy and who also have competent public affairs officers⁶ and processes to support U.S. communication efforts.

It is essential for public affairs to be a key part of BPC in order to assist our allies and partners to achieve dominance in the information domain. When we assist our partners in the development of PA standards, processes and skills, they achieve a greater understanding of the strategic impact of communication and therefore will better complement our communication efforts during a contingency. BPC requires little investment from the U.S. but can achieve great strategic impact and positively impact mission success.

There is little to no literature describing how the U.S. military supports the development of other nations’ public affairs capabilities. This paper will explore how

U.S. public affairs skills and knowledge as a “means” supports the achievement of U.S. strategic objectives; it will then explain how developing our partner’s public affairs capabilities fulfill the “ways” of the strategy. Examining the ways and means from the PA perspective will then be followed up by exploring some examples from the institutional environment, combatant commands and Service Component PA staffs. The paper will then share best practices from the examples.

The Doctrine of Building Partner Capacity

Building Partner Capacity (BPC) is routinely highlighted in strategic documents but not specifically defined by joint doctrine. However, U.S. Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) recently published *U.S. Army Concept for Building Partner Capacity* which defines BPC as the “outcome of comprehensive inter-organizational activities, programs, and engagements that enhance the ability of partners for security, governance, economic development, essential services, rule of law, and other critical government functions.”⁷ As defined by the Army, there are three tenets of a comprehensive BPC approach. First, it creates recurring engagement that sustains partner trust and confidence. Secondly, it develops enduring capabilities (“the ability to perform a function”) that prevent and deter regional instability by improving operational capacity (“the extent of a capability present”) in the short term and self-sustaining institutional capacity in the long term.⁸ Finally, it focuses on partner nation human capital, providing the vehicle for lasting impact on our partners’ professional security force capability.⁹ Although dated, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review captured BPC as the term for activities that used to be called security cooperation, and may even include the broader concept of peacetime engagement.¹⁰ Over the last decade, building

the capabilities and capacity of U.S. allies and partners has become increasingly important in accomplishing objectives associated with U.S. strategic guidance.

Security cooperation and assistance are key components of BPC. Joint doctrine has assigned definitions for security cooperation and security assistance, both of which pertain to the work the U.S. military conducts with partner nations. Security cooperation consists of all Department of Defense (DoD) interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.¹¹ There are many different types of military security cooperation activities. A 2006 Rand Arroyo Center study identified more than 70 Army security cooperation activities to include military education and training conducted by military training teams, and military exercises to promote skills development and interoperability of participating countries.¹²

Security assistance (SA) is an element of security cooperation by which the U.S. provides defense materials, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales to advance U.S. national policies and objectives. These legislatively approved and funded programs are authorized by Department of State to be administered by DoD/Defense Security Cooperation Agency.¹³ The U.S. military is also charged with security force assistance, which is a more complex form of SA focused on training, equipping and advising foreign security forces in order to increase their capacities and capabilities.¹⁴

While partner capacity and capability are clearly defined in joint doctrine, some confusion is associated with the BPC mission to integrate our partners into ongoing and future U.S.-led coalition operations around the world. Retired Army Lt. Gen. James Dubik, who is considered to be a subject matter expert on ways to improve U.S. and allied training of indigenous security forces in Afghanistan and elsewhere, used a recent article to clear up some confusion associated with the BPC mission.¹⁵ Dubik identifies three categories of partner-capacity missions as they apply to military forces: building the capacity of current allies and partners with already mature military forces; fixing the tactical shortcomings of indigenous military forces; and creating both military forces and institutions.¹⁶

In the first category, Dubik points out that the capacities of our European allies and partners have degraded due to a reduction of military spending that began after the Cold War. This makes it more important for the U.S. to rededicate itself to a “system of alliance and partnerships appropriate for the current strategic environment.”¹⁷ These relationships provide key strategic benefits for the U.S. such as access to airspace, logistics, and air and sea ports of entry all essential at the theater and global level. However, the U.S. cannot increase the capacity of these mature allies and partners if we don’t have a force large enough to commit resources that will sustain the relationship.

Dubik’s second category for capacity-building missions calls for broadening our focus and improving the institutional and support systems of the indigenous military forces we work with. This category is defined as “improving battlefield performance of our partners and increasing a force’s confidence.”¹⁸ It is not enough to fix the tactical

shortcomings associated with a military force; these are usually the symptoms of an underlying problem with the organization. For example, poor personnel policies may contribute to insufficient pay and allowances and a corrupt promotion system.¹⁹ Dubik points out that the BPC mission should not be limited to special operations forces as they are a limited asset. He asserts that general purpose forces are more than capable of executing the mission. The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review also focused on strengthening the general purpose forces capabilities for the BPC mission by allowing service components to add more than 500 personnel to their train-the-trainer units for general purpose forces.²⁰ The last category of BPC missions that Dubik describes is the most expansive of the three and “requires a broad enterprise approach that builds security forces simultaneously with creating security ministry proficiency.”²¹ Efforts in this last category are typically long-term. Our recent missions in Iraq and Afghanistan – Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq and NATO Training Mission-Iraq and NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan – have successfully demonstrated Dubik’s concept in this category.

U.S. strategic objectives and the doctrinal framework describing BPC provide a starting point in determining how public affairs can best support this mission. Many activities have been focused on building up the operational capacity of our partners. These material aspects of BPC are important but we must also develop the human capital of the partner nations we work with. Admiral James Stavridis, the commander of European Command (EUCOM), has stressed that building partner capacity also includes the power of ideas and concepts.²² Providing public affairs support to our allies and partners is just what the Admiral described – “an investment in people, not

material.”²³ The development of public affairs skills, capabilities, and principles is a subset of military capability, critical to the effectiveness of both partners.

Developing Public Affairs Capacity with U.S. Partners

Drawing on the EUCOM commander’s wisdom again, we are sharing techniques and processes that have worked for us, but recognize that each partner has a unique culture and approach to communication.²⁴ For PA to be as effective as possible in supporting the BPC mission, helping our allies and partners to develop competent PA professionals embedded within their units is a key objective. The nature of today’s information environment puts greater demand on Ministries of Defense to release information. Partner nations possess different levels of capacity and capability so a blanket approach will not work for everyone. Some countries may provide professional public relations training for their officers but have no dedicated cadre of military public affairs specialists. An important assumption is that providing PA support is more likely to succeed and potentially develop into capacity if the capability is of interest to both the partner and the U.S. military.²⁵ As we develop PA capacity with our partners, we will need to be aware of differences and approaches.

There are differences between U.S. military PA processes and partner nation processes. The first difference pertains to the audiences we communicate with. While the U.S. military has an obligation to communicate with the American public, our partners may not view communicating with their national audience as a priority. Asian-Pacific armies are a prime example of this dynamic; although they execute media relations, many view command information as a higher priority.²⁶ Another difference pertains to legal authorities. The institutions of our allies and partners may operate

under different legal and statutory authorities so we don't want to "Americanize" their communication efforts.

The third difference pertains to the organizational structure and roles of the public affairs officer (PAO). Some of our partners combine public affairs and other information activities under one staff which may cause some concern for the U.S. PAO providing support. There has been a lot of discussion over the last eight years concerning the separation of public affairs and information operations in the U.S. military. In 2004, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a warning about the risks of integrating public affairs and information operations.²⁷ Following that, the Public Relations Society of America publicly advocated a "firewall separation between information operations and public affairs."²⁸ Many commanders acknowledged the guidance but still found a way to harness the capabilities of both disciplines to enhance unity of effort and increase mission effectiveness. We need to follow the same approach when executing the BPC mission. If our partners are required to exercise a broader communication skillset, we must integrate other staff expertise to support this important mission.

Not only are there differences in how PA is situated in partner nations, our allies and partners will fall at different points of the spectrum as it pertains to public affairs skills. An assessment of our partner's PA capability allows us to plan an appropriate engagement strategy. BPC is by design, and by activity, a win-win strategy; the U.S. should conduct the assessments in concert with the partner nation and pick which approach is best for achieving objectives for both countries.

Depending on the capabilities of our partner PAO, the U.S. military PA staff will build an approach based on three levels: foundational, developmental, and advanced.

Partner militaries that lack dedicated PA offices and express interest in building their capabilities are classified as foundational. In these cases, the U.S. should encourage that military to invest in PA education and arrange for further PA training for select officers or civilians. In the interim, U.S. military PAOs working with that country can sponsor media training for the partner nation's military leaders so they are better prepared to address the press. This also exposes military senior leaders to the benefits of a PA program. The developmental level may involve training exercises with a more capable partner that seeks to improve proficiency and interoperability of both parties. Once a relationship is established with a partner in the developmental level, the U.S. military PAOs can further develop the basic PA skills by conducting Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEEs) or other engagements to address areas of interest/needs for our partners. At the advanced level, the U.S. and partner nation have interacted through recurring and sustained military-to-military engagements and have successfully demonstrated complete interoperability and proficiency of key level PA tasks.

Developing the social media capability within our partner PA practitioners is very important. New media has drastically increased the need for speedy engagement and release of information presenting opportunities and challenges for the U.S. military. It provides PAOs a powerful information conduit for the execution of the internal information and media relations mission. Conversely, our adversaries have also learned to leverage this resource and have proven capable of generating image-rich propaganda that hits the Internet and airwaves within 45 minutes of U.S. lethal engagements.²⁹

Social media platforms can also serve as trustworthy channels of information during times of physical emergencies and natural disasters, of which our partners in the Asia Pacific region continue to suffer disproportionately. During the series of floods that affected Thailand in 2011-2012, the Thai public chose social media as a conduit for information instead of going to mainstream media and official channels such as the government or military.³⁰ The United States can help our allies and partner nations tap into these resources and better manage crises when they strike. This transparency of public information promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their military is doing.

Many U.S. PAOs recognize that building and maintaining relationships with both domestic and international audiences is an integral part of military operations. Unfortunately, the United States is behind the power curve when it comes to understanding international audiences, well enough to disseminate messages that are packaged in ways that resonate.³¹ This is mainly due to a lack of cultural expertise and audience knowledge. Our partners must take a greater role in helping the United States build and maintain relationships with relevant publics. In some cases, partner nations PAOs are the appropriate and credible messengers that should deliver the message.

The U.S. military must have partners who possess specific PA skills, capabilities, and principles to enable their mutual success in the complex information environment. There is no single reference indicating which basic and advanced level PA skills are appropriate for any Ministry of Defense, but the Department of Defense (DoD) Principles of Information offers a starting point. These fundamental communication principles chart the course for all DoD PA activities, and apply to the full continuum of

day-to-day activities and operations. Two key principles from the principles are “making available timely and accurate information” to the various publics and “information shall be made fully and readily available.”³² U.S. military PAOs remember these principles by way of the phrase “maximum disclosure, minimum delay.”

Basic level PA skills include writing for audience, staff coordination, and advising commanders for effective interviews using different mediums. These skills and principles may be universal to U.S. communicators but may take some time for our partners to absorb and realize the benefits associated with them. Although our partner nations PAOs reflect of their country’s cultural norms and beliefs, these principles offer a generally universal baseline for internal and external communication and should supersede any cultural differences.

As we align the right public affairs skills and processes against a partner's unique mission requirements, we will determine that our partners possess advanced PA capabilities and others need improvement. Higher order skills that may be evaluated include the ability to plan integrated PA operations; to provide advice to commanders; to coordinate/deconflict communications with partner nations; to synchronize communications across nations in order to achieve more credible results with greater reach; coordinate a social media program; and to coordinate with other agencies when crises or physical emergencies arise. A key skill at the advanced level is drafting a communications plan with supporting public affairs guidance that facilitates conducting complementary multinational operations. Routine assessments of the development of our partner’s PA skills ensures U.S. military PAOs build capability with each engagement and achieves positive return from our efforts.

Many benefits are gained by the U.S. military by providing PA support to our allies and partners. Some of these include ensuring common communication procedures and interoperability; having access to partner nation PAOs who have better knowledge of the local language, geography and culture; and demonstrating U.S. legitimacy when conducting multinational operations. Our partners also realize benefits by interacting with U.S. military PAOs. In addition to the training and/or education they receive, exposure to U.S. military public affairs activities is another way to improve their abilities. An important benefit common to both parties is the development of working relationships built on mutual trust and respect. Another shared benefit is the creation of a common operating picture of a particular region which limits friction and paves the way for informational unity of effort. Other shared benefits include similar principles/philosophies about transparency; accuracy when communicating with the various local, regional and international audiences; and a shared understanding of the benefits of sharing information and synchronizing actions.

Looking at current BPC efforts more closely, we find that U.S. military PAOs develop partner PA capacity along two interwoven lines of effort: training and experiential learning. Training tends to be more formalized with efforts occurring at the operational level (CCMD or ASCC) and focus on developing the PA skills and capabilities of our partners during training events and exercises. Also included in this line of effort is an educational aspect where U.S. military PAOs teach PA basic skills at an institution. Both DINFOS and NATO offer training courses for this purpose. Equally important is the second line of effort that develops PA skills and processes of our partners through experiential learning where they are exposed to U.S. military public

affairs activities through recurring engagements. This experiential learning offers our partners a valuable way to build on foundational skills, test concepts, and absorb PA philosophies by observing U.S. military PAOs in action.

The U.S. military must achieve the desired objectives associated with PA support to BPC by investing in education, training, and language skills. Basic PA skills are best trained in the institutional environment and further developed through collective training and experiential learning. We must encourage our partners to take advantage of basic and advanced levels of public affairs training offered at U.S. and NATO institutions. Multinational courses provide PA instruction but more importantly, build lasting professional relationships with our counterparts from other nations. Routine engagements, training exercises and participation in multinational operations will assist in developing advanced PA skills but may take years to master. The development of PA skills is an investment in our partners and requires hard work to achieve the optimal public affairs endstate.

For continued improvement, U.S. military PAOs must ensure public affairs training is integrated into multinational training exercises. During these exercises, establishing a Media Operations Center (MOC) or Combined Press Operations Center (CPIC) allows U.S. and partner PAOs to share information and synchronize actions and provides experiential learning opportunities for our partners. In a recent command blog, Admiral Stavridis noted that DoD has an “obvious capability gap” in its lack of foreign language skills that affect its global missions, and offered recommendations to promote language and cultural skills across DoD.³³ Fewer than 10 percent of DoD members speak a second language while some of our partners may speak multiple languages to

include English.³⁴ U.S. military PAOs should invest in improving their foreign language capabilities and learning the culture of the countries they are working with. Overcoming these language and cultural barriers will improve our ability to work with our partners and allies.

Illustrative Examples

A survey of PA support to BPC reflects distinct approaches, appropriate to the region or the institution. The survey reviewed current practices at the Army institutional level, the ASCCs, and the geographic combatant commands. In all of the cases, PAOs are executing guidance outlined in U.S. national security strategy and steadily building relationships and earning trust with our partners. The Defense Information School (DINFOS) headquartered at Fort Meade, Maryland, sponsors a five-week program that helps partner nations develop public affairs capabilities. DINFOS is the joint school for all public affairs training and education across the US military services.

The Public Affairs Course for International Students (PACIS) was instituted in 2012 and addresses U.S. partner nation needs by preparing international military PAOs to meet the demands of the emerging information environment. Col. Jeremy Martin, commandant of DINFOS, said, "We are basically building partner capacity so that if there is a contingency requirement, (graduates of this program) could go into an operation with a basic level of expertise about how to communicate with various audiences."³⁵ Research for the program began after the release of the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review calling for "increased international student opportunities at U.S. professional military schools in order to secure a more peaceful and cooperative international order."³⁶ The course also offers U.S. military personnel the opportunity to train with and learn from foreign counterparts.

Building on the experience of the NATO School Oberammergau public affairs course, designed to provide standardized PA instruction for NATO Member Nation and Partner Nation Public Affairs Officers, DINFOS leaders defined their objectives to more closely align with BPC objectives. Although NATO offers a public affairs policy indoctrination course for military and civilian students from 55 NATO, Partnership for Peace, and Mediterranean dialogue countries, DINFOS leaders concluded the course should address a higher level skill set for the international community.³⁷ DINFOS leadership then recommended to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs, that the course be launched emphasizing two main points pertaining to the curriculum – stay away from advocating a U.S. centric approach, and include information on military/civilian public affairs activities during coalition peacekeeping, humanitarian relief and natural disaster operations.³⁸ The curriculum for the course includes five main functional areas: Public affairs and Civil-Military Operations, Media Relations, Public Affairs Planning, Public Affairs Communication Skills, and Social Media. The capstone project for the course requires students to develop a communication plan consisting of three components: internal information, external information, and community relations. The hope is that the plan will be implemented by their nation when the student returns home.³⁹

The Public Affairs Course for International Students is intended for international military and civilian personnel selected by their governments to perform public affairs functions and who have little to no public affairs training. Nations that currently have a formal public affairs training program are excluded from attending the course.⁴⁰ U.S. requirements dictate that the students must be from the defense ministries of nations

operating within the Security Cooperation Education and Training Program (SCETP) framework.⁴¹ The U.S. Army's Security Assistance Training Field Activity (SATFA) works with DINFOS and the Combatant Commands (CCMDs) to determine which countries need the public affairs training.⁴² SATFA "sponsors Security Assistance Training Programs (Title 22) and selected Department of Defense Programs (Title 10) that bring approved international military students (IMS) and civilians to U.S. Army-managed training in CONUS."⁴³ The first course in January 2012 graduated 11 students from countries that included Brazil, Croatia, Indonesia, Iraq and Taiwan. A second class in October 2012 graduated 11 students from Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Philippines, and Turkey. The class even included one of our newest partners from U.S. Africa Command's area of responsibility, Southern Sudan.⁴⁴

The next examples of PA support to BPC are found within the combatant commands (CCMDs) and one Army Service Component Command (ASCC). Examples from Central Command (CENTCOM), EUCOM, and U.S. Army Pacific Command (USARPAC) focus on specific relationships between the U.S. military and Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and Japan. Close examination of these examples will reveal best practices that may be applied to other nations as we continue to strengthen the Public Affairs role in BPC.

There are some commonalities among the CCMDs on how they communicate their BPC efforts although there is no formal strategy for building partner PA capacity. Written orders are one way although none of the PA annexes specifically state BPC as part of a mission set or specific task; public websites are another means to communicate BPC efforts. A review of all the public affairs annexes in support of each

CCMD's Theater Campaign Plan revealed no specific reference to PA support to the BPC mission. Many of the PA staffs are focused on traditional public affairs tasks however they outline the work done with the U.S. Embassy PAO to coordinate with host-nation government press/information and military PA offices on the CCMD's behalf. Similar to other U.S. public affairs staffs, the CCMD PA office focuses its efforts on informing the American and international publics to gain their support for operations. Additionally, the offices provide internal/command information for American forces in theater and support coalition public information operations.⁴⁵

Command websites are an important resource for the CCMD to communicate their BPC efforts. They provide the public image for the CCMDs along with supplying basic information about the command to include the mission, key activities, and organizational structure.⁴⁶ Each of the geographical CCMD's mention capacity-building as an essential task either in their mission statements or focus areas. Because capacity-building efforts at these commands are such an integral part of their mission, the websites highlight relationships with partner nations through the use of fact sheets, news stories with supporting photographs advertising exercises and mil-to-mil exchanges, and professional articles.

Social media is an integral part of the U.S. Department of Defense's operations and "stands to be an effective tool recruitment, awareness and public relations."⁴⁷ U.S. military PAOs have increasingly leveraged social media platforms to communicate with their various audiences. The U.S. Army has been widely noted for its proactive stance on social media and recently published its 2013 Social Media Handbook. The handbook outlines the importance of social media and how these platforms are promoting two-way

communication: "Social media allows every Soldier to be a part of the Army story and it allows America to connect with its Army. Social media is a cheap, effective and measurable form of communication. The Army uses social media to tell the Army's story, but it also uses social media to listen."⁴⁸ Because social media platforms are becoming increasingly popular with people around the world, our allies and partners will make a wise decision by investing in this PA capability.

The first two illustrative examples focus on CENTCOM and its relationship with Jordan and Egypt. CENTCOM's area of responsibility covers the "central" area of the globe and consists of 20 countries some of which include Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran and Jordan. While CENTCOM engages its partner nations in PA broadly, CENTCOM's interactions with Jordan and Egypt yield illustrative examples that contribute to best practices knowledge.

Many of the Middle Eastern countries have military public affairs professionals who are assigned to a Directorate of Morale Guidance (DoMG) office which oversees public affairs, information operations, and religious engagement. Unlike U.S. military PA offices, the DoMG is not confined by law to divide public affairs and information operations, so their actions/words may be viewed as propaganda. Additionally, our Middle Eastern partners have been passive in communicating their relationship with the United States so as not to provoke their regional partners. In recent years, countries like Jordan have become more active in communicating their relationship with the U.S. military as evidenced by Exercise Eager Lion in May 2012.

This annual exercise is hosted by Jordan and includes U.S. troop participation from CENTCOM. Overall, the Eager Lion exercise is designed to promote cooperation

and interoperability among more than 11,000 participating troops from 19 countries to build functional capacity and enhance readiness.⁴⁹ Operating under a Combined-Joint-Task-Force structure (CJTF-Spartan), the 2012 exercise focused on irregular warfare. Jordanian and U.S. military leaders held a joint press conference on May 15, with more than 40 media members from 29 agencies in attendance that coincided with the official beginning of the exercise. Military PAOs working in a Combined Press Operations Center (CPIC) included representatives from the U.S., Jordan, Italy, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. Public information was routed through the U.S. Embassy in Jordan as well as the lead Jordanian PAO before release.⁵⁰

By establishing a CPIC that effectively integrated all the coalition members, CENTCOM promoted unity of effort within the information domain. The tactic of routing public information through both the Jordan leadership and the U.S. Embassy in Jordan underscored the importance the US-Jordanian partnership and interagency coordination.⁵¹ Exercise Eager Lion coincided with unrest in Syria, but the joint U.S./Jordanian press conference clarified that the exercise had no connection with the events happening in Syria. The accurate and timely release of information supporting the exercise prevented the press from tying U.S./Jordanian actions in relation to Syrian unrest. It has been uncommon for Jordan to use an active posture with the media, but because of the relationship with the U.S. military and the perceived gains associated with working with the media, Jordan's communication efforts gained some momentum as a result of Exercise Eager Lion.⁵² CENTCOM's relationship with Jordan can be considered a good model for other countries within the region to follow.

In a second example, CENTCOM PAO hosted a first-ever, media-training session in Washington, D.C. for Egyptian military officers in June 2012. The training included media relations, an overview of social media and crisis management, and exchanges with U.S. public affairs professionals working in various intergovernmental organizations. An article in *Time* magazine described this as a “big deal” since the Egyptian military, especially their generals, never engage the media.⁵³ Prior to this development, a strong relationship with the press did not seem to be a priority for the Egyptian military. In fact, in an effort to push back against public criticism, the Egyptian military warned the Egyptian news media to censor critical reporting of the Egyptian military in June 2011. Perhaps the empowerment of the PAOs will offer some transparency for the Egyptian military and build a better relationship with “ordinary Egyptians.”⁵⁴

Generally speaking, Middle Eastern PAOs possess the basic PA skills but need greater assistance with integrated planning and social media.⁵⁵ Some of these tasks may include developing a communication plan and getting buy-in for that plan from the DoMG. CENTCOM recognizes that there is some disparity within the capabilities among the countries. Despite that, our Middle Eastern military partners are very capable and know how to communicate.⁵⁶ The greater challenge is broadening the U.S. mindset to dispel the belief that the U.S. way is the best way. This attitude can alienate our partners rather than fostering a relationship built on mutual trust and respect. From CENTCOM’s perspective, it’s less about what is taught to partner nations but more about the relationships developed through BPC efforts that can be leveraged during a crisis or contingency.

The third illustrative example of PA support to BPC efforts is found in EUCOM and focuses on the professional relationship between PAOs from the EUCOM staff and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). EUCOM's area of responsibility includes 51 independent countries that extend beyond Europe into the Caucasus as well as Israel. The U.S. military and Israel have a long-standing partnership and EUCOM builds on this relationship through the execution of various engagements and exercises. A recurring exercise is Austere Challenge, which is a bilateral air-defense exercise between the U.S. and Israel involving more than 3,500 U.S. personnel in Israel and Europe and approximately 1,000 IDF personnel in Israel.⁵⁷

With some augmentation from the Joint PA Support Element from Norfolk, VA, EUCOM PA set up a Media Operations Center (MOC) with the IDF in support of Austere Challenge 2012. Prior to the start of the exercise, the MOC coordinated a phone-in interview for 73 journalists from the Pentagon Press Corps, international reporters stationed in Israel, and a number of local reporters. Lt. Gen. Craig Franklin, Commander of Third Air Force, regional air defense commander for EUCOM, and General Nuriel, the lead Israeli planner for the 2012 exercise, participated in the conference call with the media.⁵⁸ Like the joint press conference held by Jordanian and U.S. military leaders in May 2012, during Exercise Eager Lion, Austere Challenge coincided with some tensions within the region. When asked if the exercise was in response to events in the region, Lt. Gen. Franklin said, "It is not related to national elections or any perceived tensions in the Middle East. We are military professionals coming together to train for a defensive mission."⁵⁹

The EUCOM public affairs office has a strong role in the partnership mission with the IDF and has established a Combined Standard Operating Procedure (CSOP) with the IDF public affairs office. Both staffs agreed upon a set of media guidelines to be followed in peacetime that are also applicable in the event of a contingency.⁶⁰ SOPs help military personnel maintain consistency in their procedures. Adhering to the guidelines outlined in a SOP during peacetime allows the U.S. and Israel to discuss possible areas of friction before responding to a contingency. A general rule is to get approval from the other country prior to public comments about the cooperative relationship between the militaries.⁶¹

Unlike the United States, the IDF is not a global force and its entire military structure resides within Israel. The primary audience for the military is the people of Israel and a subset of the IDF forces/families. The distinctly defensive role of the IDF informs and shapes its public communication thus prompting them to develop a sophisticated and extensive social media presence. Leveraging social media supports the IDF's efforts by building public trust and understanding for the military's contributions to Israel's national security along with offering transparency with their various audiences. The unique military role of the IDF has shaped its unique public affairs activities.

The final illustrative case study of PA support to BPC focuses on U.S. Army Pacific, or USARPAC, the U.S. Army's Service Component Command in the Asia-Pacific region. USARPAC's mission and theater security cooperation efforts clarify that the Asia-Pacific region is not merely a maritime domain and that maintaining Army military-to-military relationships is a primary objective. Public affairs partnerships are

particularly important in this region comprised of people and shaped by armies.

USARPAC works with 36 nations, partnering with 7 of the world's 10 largest Armies.

Their partnerships include 26 of the 27 nations in the region with militaries where the Army is the largest service; and 21 of 27 Chiefs of Defense are Army General Officers.⁶²

The theater faces complex threats (transnational, terrorism, domestic) with origins and support that are land-based, so USARPAC works diligently to build partner capacity and capability so allies and partners can operate independently within their own borders and potentially as part of a multinational effort in response to larger threats.⁶³ As USARPAC executes its Theater Security Plan, engaging partners is the first and decisive line of effort in accomplishing the mission. These activities are executed as part of Phase 0 (Steady State) and include partnering and training events, support to bilateral and multinational military exercises, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges, partner/Soldier exchange assignments, and the National Guard State Partnership program. In fact, USARPAC exceeded 170 activities/events last year and reached out to countries the U.S. Army has not engaged in the past.⁶⁴

Also included in USARPAC's engagement activities is the support they provide to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief training and real world crisis response operations. Asia-Pacific is home to the "Ring of Fire," an area known for earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, as well as its potential for "spark plugs," or incidents.⁶⁵ Natural disasters are the one common security threat experienced by all countries throughout this region, but having established relationships makes responding to these events relatively obstacle free and more fluid if base relationships had not been established. A case in point was Operation Tomodachi where in 2011, U.S. military forces based in the

Asia-Pacific provided support to Japan after a devastating earthquake, tsunami and radiological crisis.

The USARPAC PA staff has strong relationships within the region established through Phase 0 activities and other types of exchanges such as the Taiwan "Lu Wei" Program and executive steering group. A recent example demonstrating extensive public affairs coordination between USARPAC and one of their counterparts is Yama Sakura 63, a bilateral training exercise held twice a year with members of the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force (JGSDF) and the U.S. military. The exercise began in 1982 and is designed to enhance the combat readiness and interoperability between the two nations. Approximately 1,500 personnel from U.S. Army Pacific, U.S. Army Japan, 8th Army and U.S. Marine Corps and approximately 4,500 personnel from Northeastern Army, JGSDF participated in the December 2012 exercise.⁶⁶

The public affairs support for Yama Sakura 63 was synchronized between the U.S. and Japan long before the exercise commencement. USARPACs PA staff established and maintained a routine, ongoing relationship with the JGSDF PA staff. They participated in planning conferences leading up to the exercise and developed the public affairs plan that included an opening press conference, photo opportunities and the command information plan.⁶⁷

Generally speaking, PAOs from the Pacific Asian armies have a lot in common with U.S. Army PAOs. Accomplishing the mission and telling their Army story is first and foremost. As mentioned earlier, Pacific Asian armies place greater priority on command information but still execute the media relations mission. Despite the approachability of

the Asian media, the JGSDF have outlined very strict rules for the Asian media and determine what the media can/cannot ask during press engagements.⁶⁸

The USARPAC PAO also stressed the importance of collaboration between the U.S. military and the U.S. Embassy Team operating in that partner nation. U.S. military PAOs at the ASCC or CCMD level will work closely with a Public Diplomacy Officer (PDO) or PAO assigned to the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section when executing the BPC mission. Although public diplomacy efforts of the U.S. seek to “influence a society’s attitudes and actions in supporting U.S. policies and national interests,”⁶⁹ U.S. military PAOs can still leverage the expertise resident in those offices to gain cultural awareness and greater understanding of local social dynamics within that country and/or region. Additionally, building these relationships with the U.S. Embassy Team early on contributes to unity of effort within the information domain when a crisis develops.

Best Practices

These examples illustrate multiple BPC activities that have shown to be effective. DINFOS supports the BPC mission by providing PA support at the foundational level by building international partners with enhanced communication skills necessary to meet the demands of the emerging information environment. The United States benefits by having access to a cadre of trained PAOs who are better able to address regional issues and support coalition operations. Central Command has made steady progress with countries in its AOR, most notably with the PA staffs from Jordan and Egypt. This benefits CENTCOM by forging relationships with two key partners in the region, each of whom now share a common set of PA principles, and common operating picture of the region. For EUCOM, a mature relationship with the PA staff from the Israeli military is

strengthened and revalidated each year through participation in Austere Challenge. Open lines of communication between the military PA staffs is beneficial due to the complex security environment of the region. Finally, U.S. Army Pacific's work underscores the importance of expanded Army engagement as the U.S. continues its focus in the Asia-Pacific. A model relationship is found between the USARPAC PA staff and the JGSDF who have conducted PA operations in both peacetime and in response to real-world missions such as Operation Tomodachi.

Building public affairs capacity activities at the institutional and operational level have validated the point that BPC is by design and by activity a win-win event for the U.S. and our partners. Best practices are those that develop professional public affairs relationships; heighten US and partner understanding of each other; leverage expertise resident in U.S. embassy country teams; and strive to achieve sustained military-to-military engagement.

Relationships are Key

Although there is some capacity-building illustrated in all of the previous examples, of notable value are the relationships that are forged between PAOs by participating in engagements along the training and experiential lines of effort. As many of the PAOs interviewed have noted, building two-way relationships in which both partners have a stake in the outcome is essential. Frequent engagements between the EUCOM and IDF public affairs staffs have provided opportunities for them to truly integrate and gain a greater appreciation for each other's backgrounds, as well as serve as venues to discuss best practices in peacetime and contingencies. Routine exchanges institutionalize a new way of thinking for both partners that include a common operating picture, similar principles/philosophies about transparency,

accuracy, a shared understanding of the benefits of sharing information, and synchronizing actions.

Heighten U.S. and Partner Understanding

In total, the geographic combatant commands work with more than 190 countries, and therefore PA staffs must gain an appreciation for the PA organization, processes, and cultures of each of those counterparts. This may seem like a daunting task but a thorough understanding of our partner's point of view matters and we must take this into consideration when developing an approach for PA support. A starting point is sharing a common set of PA principles that will help overcome cultural differences when working together. Because of the threats of natural and man-made disasters in the Asia Pacific region, USARPAC conducts training exercises with PA involvement with its partners to better respond to these events. This allows our partners to exercise advanced PA skills such as planning integrated PA operations; and coordinating with other agencies when crises or physical emergencies arise. Many PA staffs include Subject Matter Expert Engagements Active in their country engagement plans as it provides a forum for developing relationships and exchanging views. Active listening by U.S. military PAOs will prevent disengagement from partner nation peers and allows us to do a better job building the trust essential for any relationship.

Leverage the Expertise Resident within the U.S. Embassy Country Teams

Many of the PAOs interviewed stressed the importance of working with U.S. interagency partners assigned to the military staff or PDOs assigned to the U.S. embassies who have a greater understanding of the cultural nuance related to the information environment. By law and policy, CCMDs plan and execute capacity-building activities in coordination with, or under the auspices of, State Department programs. At

a practical level, detailed understanding of the local information environment and coordination with both U.S. and partner nation assets is critical and facilitates effective communication across all partners.

Sustained Military-to-Military Engagement

In each of the examples at the CCMD and ASCC level, PAOs benefitted most by working shoulder to shoulder with their counterparts during exercises, but these were not the first contact. The partner PAOs participated in routine engagements and interactions leading up to the exercises resulting in a more capable partner along with improving the proficiency and interoperability of both parties. The IDF and EUCOM PA staffs are now honing advanced PA skills by conducting training and exercises which include joint press conferences and running a MOC. The mature relationship with Israel suggests innovative ways to advance our partnership in other countries with PA capabilities similar to the IDF. The Jordanian military is now a casebook example for providing PA support to multinational operations. The USARPAC PA staff has invested in routine exchanges with their partners which has institutionalized new ways of thinking. U.S. military PAOs must sustain these routine interactions to build on the training foundation they have built. Additionally, our partner PAOs benefit from experiential learning which allows them to build on foundational skills, test concepts, and absorb PA philosophies by observing U.S. military PAOs in action. We must develop PA capacity through recurring and sustained military-to-military engagements that sustains partner trust and confidence.

Conclusion

National and DoD strategic guidance emphasizes the need to leverage the capabilities of our allies and partners to share the burden of addressing future security

threats and to bolster their defense self-sufficiency. The evolution of the information environment will continue to place greater demand on the U.S. military, and social media platforms will increasingly become a conduit of information. Our adversaries will also leverage similar platforms to support the achievement of their objectives. The rapid flow of information in this environment will mean public affairs officers will have a limited amount of time to “relate a coherent and credible narrative of success, progress, and positive consequences that extends beyond the reach of a command’s actual physical presence.”⁷⁰ In some cases, success or failure for a mission will be tied to the efficacy of that military command’s information campaign. For the foreseeable future, U.S. military PAOs will work alongside counterparts from partner nations prompting a need to develop partner PA skills in order to better complement U.S. communication efforts. The development of public affairs skills, capabilities and processes must be a key part of BPC in order to assist our allies and partners to achieve dominance in the information domain. U.S. military PAOs at the institutional and operational level support the building partner capacity mission and building capabilities that produce lasting capacity in our partners. Building public affairs capacity in our partners may start with training but must then develop through experiential development and education. As the U.S. looks for innovative and low cost ways to develop capability and capacity in our partners around the globe, leading the development of other nations’ public affairs capacity is a critical investment in these partnerships, as required by the DSG to secure mutual security interests.

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